of the phase-out period. India offered to reduce the schedule to seven years, which was accepted by the majority of the Members of the Committee but the meeting concluded without consensus. During formal bilateral consultations held under the dispute settlement mechanism, India reached a mutually satisfactory solution each with Australia, Canada the European Communities, New Zealand and Switzerland, as well as with Japan which was a third party to the disputes, on a time schedule of six years with three consecutive phases of 3 years, 2 years and one year, for the removal of import restrictions in a balanced manner within each phase. Settlement has not been reached only with the United States and at its request at a dispute settlement panel has been constituted in the WTO to examine the US allegation that the continued maintenance of quantitative restrictions on imports by India is inconsistent with India's obligations under the WTO agreements. The dispute settlement panel proceeding are presently underway.

Indian's Automobile Policy at WTO

459. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India will defence Japan's challenge to its auto policy at the World Trade Organisation;

(b) if so, the strategy proposed; and

(c) the diplomatic negotiations in this regard to assert India's interest?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) The issue of India's auto policy was raised during the Trade Policy Review at the WTO by Japan and the rationale behind the Auto Policy was explained by India. Japan has not yet raised any formal dispute at the WTO.

Visit by German Trade Delegations

460. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some German trade delegations propose to visit India this year;

(b) if so, whether any preliminary discussions have been held by Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the areas in which the German industrialists propose to trade with India?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) There are informal indications that some business delegations from Germany might visit India in the coming months. Indian Missions in Germany remain in contact with various German agencies for providing any information/held in this regard.

(d) German industrialists are interested in trade with India in several sectors. The major items of Indian exports to Germany include textiles and garments, chemicals, gems and jewellery, leather manufacturers, handicrafts etc. Major items of German exports to India are machinery, project goods, iron and steel, manufacturers of metals, professional instruments, artificial resins, plastic materials etc.

Preliminary Assessment of Import-Export Policy

461. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA:
SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any preliminary assessment of the import-export policy modifications introduced in April, 1998;

(b) if so, the conclusions tentatively arrived at; and

(c) the follow-up action taken/contemplated, if any?

THE MINISTER OF COMMCERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) The revised EXIM policy was notified on 13.04.98. Various Export Promotion Councils/Apex Chambers of Commerce and individual exporters have, since then, conveyed their views/suggestions on different aspects of the new/amended provisions of the EXIM Policy. Many of these have been examined and appropriate modifications have been carried out in the Policy provisions, wherever it was felt necessary. The EXIM Policy review is an ongoing exercise and changes are made as and when it is considered necessary.